

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 4076

E.O. 11652: GDS 12/31/81

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: DRAFT WG REPORT ON COMBAT CAPABILITY

REF: USNATO 4044

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STAFF GROUP'S PAPER ON COMBAT
CAPABILITY REFERRED TO IN PARA 12 REFTEL. PAPER WILL BE
DISCUSSED AT WORKING GROUP MEETING SEPTEMBER 4.

BEGIN QUOTE

REVISED DRAFT REPORT BY THE WORKING GROUP

BACKGROUND

ON 30TH JULY THE UNITED KINGDOM SUGGESTED IN A
MEMORANDUM TO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL THAT REDUCTIONS OPTIONS IN
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MBFR SHOULD FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF COMBAT
CAPABILITY, RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF MANPOWER ALONE. ON
7TH AUGUST, THE UNITED KINGDOM CHARGE D'AFFAIRES FOLLOWED UP
THIS SUGGESTION BY A NOTE DEALING WITH THE QUESTION OF MEASURING

COMBAT CAPABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF PROPOSED MBFR REDUCTION
OPTIONS.

2. THE THEME OF THE UK CONCERN IS THAT REDUCTION OPTIONS
IN MBFR SHOULD BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF COMBAT CAPABILITY AND THAT
APPROPRIATE MEASURES OF COMBAT CAPABILITY MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF
ALL MAJOR WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENTS, RATHER THAN JUST MANPOWER OR
TANKS ALONE.

3. ON 19TH AUGUST THE SENIOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE REFERRED
THE QUESTION OF MEASURING COMBAT CAPABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF
MBFR TO THE WORKING GROUP, AND REQUESTED THAT THE WORKING GROUP
EXAMINATION OF THIS QUESTION BE ACCORDED A HIGH PRIORITY.

4. OTHER RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO MBFR ANALYSES HAVE ALSO
ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF ADEQUATE YARDSTICKS BY WHICH REDUCTION
OPTIONS CAN BE MEASURED EFFECTIVELY AND HAVE ASSOCIATED
REDUCTION OPTIONS WITH COMBAT CAPABILITY IN SEVERAL WAYS. THE
SHAPE ASSESSMENT OF THE US PAPER. "THE US APPROACH TO MBFR",
OF 20TH JULY SUGGESTS THAT "NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENT IN MBFR
SHOULD BE BASED ON TWO PILLARS (MANPOWER AND EQUIPMENT) INSTEAD
OF ONE ONLY" AND THAT THE TANK IS THE MOST PRACTICAL EQUIPMENT
MEASURE UPON WHICH TO BASE REDUCTIONS. FURTHER, THE MOST RECENT
US PAPER, "UNITED STATES VIEWS ON MBFR NEGOTIATING APPROACH" OF
27TH JULY PROPOSES THAT SOVIET REDUCTIONS IN A FIRST PHASE OF
MBFR BE DESCRIBED NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF MANPOWER BUT ALSO BY A
SPECIFIC NUMBER OF TANKS CONTAINED IN SPECIFIC MAJOR UNITS.

5. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THESE RECENT DISCUSSIONS
OF COMBAT CAPABILITY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND
OF EARLIER, UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS OF SEVERAL YEARS STANDING TO
BOTAIN ALLIANCE AGREEMENT ON RELATIVE FORCE CAPABILITIES.

DISCUSSION

6. DISCUSSIONS IN THE WORKING GROUP TO DATE HAVE CENTRED
ON THE CONCEPT THAT NATO MIGHT ADOPT, AS A MEASURE OF CAPABILITY,
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THE "STANDARD BATTLE GROUP" (SBG) - A NOTIONAL MILITARY FORMATION
OF ROUGHLY BATTALION SIZE WHICH CONTAINS A MIXTURE OF THE MAJOR
COMBAT ELEMENTS - TANKS, ANTI-TANK WEAPONS, ARMoured PERSONNEL
CARRIERS AND ARTILLERY - IN THE SAME PROPORTION AS THESE WEAPONS
ARE FOUND IN ALLIED FORCES AND WARSAW PACT FORCES, RESPECTIVELY,
AS A WHOLE. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS CONCEPT WAS DISCUSSED
WITH A VIEW TOWARDS ITS USE IN TWO POSSIBLE WAYS: IN ACTUAL
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EAST AND FOR INTERNAL USE AS A VEHICLE TO
HELP RESOLVE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW ABOUT REDUCTION PROPOSALS WITHIN
THE ALLIANCE IN THE PERIOD BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS. IT WAS NOT
CONSIDERED THAT THE SBG COULD CONSTITUTE A SUITABLE MEASURE IN
PUBLIC PRESENTATION.

7. IN WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS OF THIS MATTER, IT HAS
GENERALLY BEEN AGREED THAT:

(A) THE UNDERLYING CONCERN EXPRESSED BY THE UK AS WELL
AS BY SHAPE - THAT THE ALLIES SHOULD NOT MEASURE
THE IMPLICATIONS OF REDUCTION OPTIONS OR OF RESIDUAL
CAPABILITY ON THE BASIS OF MANPOWER ALONE - IS
WHOLLY VALID AND IS HARED BY THE WORKING GROUP.
THE EMPHASIS ON MAINTAINING UNDIMINISHED SECURITY
IN MBFR WILL NECESSITATE A CAREFUL EVALUATION OF THE
RELATIVE MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RESIDUAL
FORCES WHICH WOULD REMAIN AFTER IMPEMNTATION OF
MBFR REDUCTIONS.

(B) COMBAT CAPABILITY IS A BLEND OF MANY DISPARATE FACTORS,
SOME OF WHICH - SUCH AS WEAPONS EFFECTIVENESS, MANNING
LEVELS, LOGISTIC STOCKS - ARE WHOLLY OR IN PART
MEASURABLE IN QUANTIFIABLE TERMS, AND OTHERS - SUCH
AS LEADERSHIP, MORALE AND DISCIPLINE - WHICH ARE
LARGELY INTANGIBLE AND MAY ONLY BE EVALUATED
SUBJECTIVELY.

(C) THE GREAT VARIETY FOUND IN NATO GROUND FORCE UNITS -
WITH REGARD TO SIZE, STRUCTURE, EQUIPMENT, WEAPONS
SYSTEMS, READINESS, LOGISTICAL SUPPORT - MAKES THE
USE OF A SINGLE YARDSTICK SUCH AS THE SBG IMPRACTICAL
AND OVERLY SIMPLISTIC.

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(D) WARSAW PACT GROUND FORCES DEMONSTRATE A MUCH GREATER
DEGREE OF HOMOGENEITY AND LEND THEMSELVES THEREFORE
MORE READILY TO COMPARISON ON THE BASIS OF A SINGLE
STANDARDIZED UNIT OF MEASURE. THE DIVISION, AS THE
SMALLEST WARSAW PACT FORMATION EMBRACING MORE THAN
ONE MAJOR WEAPON SYSTEM, IS PERHAPS THE MOST PRACTICAL
AND READILY UNDERSTANDABLE MEASURE BY WHICH THE COMBAT
CAPABILITY OF WARSAW PACT GROUND FORCES CAN BE
EVALUATED, AT LEAST IN BROAD TERMS.

(E) FOR THE REASONS GIVEN ABOVE, IT FOLLOWS THAT NO ONE
MEASURE OF COMBAT CAPABILITY CAN BE USED AS THE
EXCLUSIVE, OR EVEN THE PRINCIPAL, MEANS BY WHICH MBFR
REDUCTION OPTIONS ARE EVALUATED. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT
REDUCTION OPTIONS BE SUBJECTED TO ANALYSIS BY VARIOUS
DIFFERENT METHODS AND YARDSTICKS. GIVEN THE
COMPLEXITY OF THE DATA AND THE LACK OF ANY AGREED
SINGLE MEASURE OF COMBT CAPABILITY, IT CAN BE
EXPECTED THAT EFFORTS TO ANALYZE MBFR OPTIONS WILL
RANGE FROM THE USE OF VERY ROUGH INDICATORS (SUCH AS
MANPOWER) WHICH HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF SIMPLICITY AND
UNDERSTANDABILITY, TO THE USE OF HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED

APPROACHES WHICH ATTEMPT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT MANY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, AND AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL FOR INTERNAL ALLIED USE ONLY, THE SBG CONCEPT WILL BE USEFUL, AS WILL OTHER METHODS OF MBFR ANALYSIS USED BY NATIONS AND SHAPE.

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(F) THE SHAPE PROPOSAL THAT "MANPOWER AND TANKS" BE RELIED UPON AS YARDSTICKS FOR MEASURING MBFR REDUCTIONS OPTIONS IS ALSO A USEFUL STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF ASSOCIATING REDUCTION OPTIONS MORE DIRECTELY WITH COMBAT CAPABILITY. THE SHAPE PROPOSAL WOULD PROVIDE A MORE ADEQUATE MEASURE OF COMBAT CAPABILITY, HOWEVER, IF THE CRITERIA OF MANPOWER AND TANKS WERE COUPLED WITH IDENTIFIED WARSAW PACT UNITS OF AT LEAST DIVISION SIZE.

(G) THE VALIDITY OF THE SBG AS A MEASURE OF COMBAT CAPABILITY OF USE IN NEGOTIATIONS IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE, AND WOULD DEPEND UPON AGREEMENT BY EAST AND WEST ON ITS COMPOSITION AND USE. SUCH AGREEMENT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO ACHIEVE; IT WOULD AT THE VERY LEAST INVOLVE DIFFICULT AND PROTRACTED DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIVE COMBAT CAPABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND ADD
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ANOTHER UNDESIRABLE DIMENSION OF COMPLEXITY TO
MBFR NEGOTIATIONS.

MBFR PHASES

8. IT WAS FURTHER GENERALLY AGREED BY THE WORKING GROUP
THAT THE NATURE OF THE PHASES PROPOSED FOR FORCE REDUCTIONS
BEARS SIGNIFICANTLY ON HOW THE QUESTION OF MEASURING COMBAT
CAPABILITY SHOULD BE TEATED.

9. ALLIANCE DISCUSSIONS SEEM TO BE TENDING TOWARD A
FIRST PHASE OF MBFR REDUCTIONS WHICH INVOLVE ONLY US AND SOVIET
FORCES, AND IN WHICH SOVIET REDUCTIONS WOULD INVOLVE A TANK ARMY,
WHEREAS US FORCES, IN RECOGNITION OF A PRINCIPLE OF ASYMMETRY,
WOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAKE REDUCTIONS IN THE FORM OF A "THIN-OUT".
THEREFORE, IN THIS FIRST PHASE, SOVIET REDUCTIONS WOULD ALREADY
BE ASSOCIATED WITH A DISCRETE, READILY UNDERSTANDABLE MEASURE OF
COMBAT CAPABILITY, WHEREAS THE US REDUCTIONS, INVOLVING "THIN-OUT"
WOULD NOT NEED TO BE SO IDENTIFIED. IF, MOREOVER, IT WERE
DECIDED, EITHER AS A RESULT OF THE EXIGENCIES OF NEGOTIATIONS OR
FOR PURELY INTERNAL ALLIED RESONS, TO HAVE US FORCE REDUCTIONS
ALSO TAKEN IN THE FORM OF COMBAT FORMATIONS, THE RELATIVE
HOMEGENITY OF THE US FORCE STRUCTURE WOULD OBIATE THE NEED FOR
THE CREATION OF ARTIFICIAL STANDARDIZED MEANS BY WHICH THE
COMBAT CAPABILITY OF THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS COULD BE MEASURED.
THUS, IT APPEARS TO THE WORKING GROUP THAT, AS REGARDS THE
PROPOSALS FOR FIRST-PHASE MBFR REDUCTIONS, ADEQUATE ACCOUNT HAS
BEEN TAKEN OF THE NEED TO ASSOCIATE WARSAW PACT REDUCTIONS WITH A
MEASURING COMBAT CAPABILITY ARE AVAILABLE BY WHICH THE EFFECTS OF
FORCE REDUCTION PROPOSALS CAN BE ASSESSED.

10. HOWEVER, AS REGARDS SECOND-PHASE MBFR REDUCTIONS, THE
QUESTION OF ASSOCIATING COMBAT CAPABILITY WITH REDUCTIONS APPEARS
TO DEMAND FURTHER ATTENTION. WHILE THE PRECISE NATURE OF A
SECOND PHASE OF MBFR REDUCTIONS REMAINS TO BE DETERMINED, IT IS
ASSUMED THAT THE REDUCTION OPTIONS WILL BE GEARED TOWARD
ACHIEVING A COMMON CEILING, OR PARITY, WITH REGARD TO NATO AND
WARSAW PACT GROUND FORCES. REDUCTIONS INVOLVING THE DISPARATE
FORCES OF SEVERAL NATIONSMAKE CONSIDERABLE MORE DIFFICULT THE
PROBLEM OF FINDING A READILY AVAILABLE MEANS OF COMPARING THE
COMBAT CAPABILITY OF DIFFERENT REDUCTION PROPOSALS. THE COMMON
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CEILING CONCEPT, MOREOVER, IN RECENT NATIONAL PROPOSALS, HAS
GENERALLY BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH A MANPOWER LIMIT ONLY AND HAS
NOT BEEN DEFINED IN TERMS OF A RESIDUAL COMBAT CAPABILITY.
THE WORKING GROUP IS UNAWARE OF ANY STUDIES WHICH EXAMINE THE
COMBAT CAPABILITYIMPLICATIONS OF HOW THE LARGE MANPOWER
REDUCTIONS NECESSARY TO ARRIVE AT THE COMMON CEILING MANPOWER

LIMITS PROPOSED IN THE 27TH JULY US PAPER MAY BE MADE. THUS, THE VIEW OF THE WORKING GROUP THAT ADEQUATE ATTENTION BE DEVOTED TO THE COMBAT CAPABILITIES INVOLVED IN REDUCTION PROPOSALS APPEARS TO BE OF GREATER CONCERN AS REGARDS THE SECOND PHASE OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS.

CONCLUSIONS

11. IT IS THE VIEW OF THE WORKING GROUP THAT:

(A) THE ALLIED APPROACH TO MBFR SHOULD NOT BE BASED ON MANPOWER ALONE, BUT SHOULD BE CLEARLY ASSOCIATED WITH COMBAT CAPABILITY AS WELL.

(B) IF MBFR REDUCTIONS ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN TWO PHASES, THE FIRST OF WHICH CONCERNS ONLY US FORCES AND SPECIFIC SOVIET COMBAT FORMATIONS, ADEQUATE METHODS FOR MEASURING THE RELATIVE COMBAT CAPABILITY REDUCTION ON EACH SIDE APPEAR TO BE AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, SUCH A CONDITION WILL NOT NECESSARILY OBTAIN FOR POSSIBLE SECOND PHASE MBFR REDUCTIONS WHEN OTHER NATO AND WP FORCES WILL PRESUMABLY BE INVOLVED.

(C) NO SINGLE YEARDSTICK CAN BE DEvised WHICH CAN ADEQUATELY MEASURE COMBAT CAPABILITY. USEFUL MEASUREMENT CRITERIA CAN RANGE FROM VERY ROUGH, SIMPLIFIED APPROACHES TO HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED ANALYSES BASED ON WAR GAMING TECHNIQUES. THE PROBLEM OF MEASURING COMBAT CAPABILITY IS MORE DIFFICULT WITH REGARD TO COMPARING NATO GROUND FORCES OF DIFFERENT NATIONS THAN FOR WARSAW PACT GROUND FORCES, WHOSE MORE HOMOGENEOUS NATURE PERMITS THE USE OF THE DIVISION AS AN ACCEPTABLE, READILY UNDERSTANDABLE MEASURE OF COMBAT CAPABILITY.

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(D) AS ALLIED PLANNING FOR MBFR DEVELOPS, GREAT CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO INSURE THAT FOLLOW-ON PHASES OF MBFR REDUCTIONS, INVOLVING EUROPEAN NATO FORCES AND DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE A COMMON CEILING OBJECTIVE, TAKE ADEQUATE ACCOUNT OF COMBAT CAPABILITY CONSIDERATIONS. FURTHER STUDY WILL NEED TO BE GIVEN TO DETERMINING ACCEPTABLE METHODS OF MEASURING COMBAT CAPABILITY IN THESE SUBSEQUENT PHASES OF MBFR AS THE NATURE OF THESE PHASES BECOMES MORE CLEAR. SUCH STUDIES SHOULD ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ALLIED NEEDS FOR FLEXIBILITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST EUROPEAN DEFENCE.

END QUOTE.

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